

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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SIL-01 /063 W

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O R 171732Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 712
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ROME 3153

USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJECT: CRITICAL REACTIONS TO DRAFT PROGRAM COMPLICATE ANDREOTTI'S
EFFORT TO FORM NEW GOVERNMENT

REF: ROME 3069

SUMMARY: ANDREOTTI'S DRAFT PROGRAM AND POLITICAL FORMULA HAVE
BEEN HARSHLY CRITICIZED BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES.
WHILE THEY AGREE THAT IT CAN NONETHELESS SERVE AS A "BASIS
FOR DISCUSSION," ALL FIND FAULT WITH BOTH THE POLITICAL AND
PROGRAM ASPECTS. THE COMMUNISTS AND LEFT PARTIES REGARD
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ANDREOTTI'S OFFER TO REQUEST THE PCI'S FAVORABLE VOTE AS
INSUFFICIENTLY "EXPLICIT" AND "CONTRACTUAL" TO
CONSTITUTE PARTICIPATION IN A TRUE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.
THE LIBERALS AND MANY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (THE GROUP
OF 100) ARE UNHAPPY HOWEVER, THAT ANDREOTTI HAS GONE TOO
FAR BY PROPOSING WHAT THEY REGARD AS, IN FACT, A
PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. ANDREOTTI MET WITH THE SECRETARIES

OF THE SIX PARTIES ON FEBRUARY 17 IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF HEIGHTENED TENSION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PARTIES HAVE REACTED CRITICALLY TO THE DRAFT PROGRAM AND PROPOSED POLITICAL FORMULA THAT ANDREOTTI PRESENTED ON FEBRUARY 16 (REFTEL). ALTHOUGH NO PARTY HAS SUMMARILY DISMISSED ANDREOTTI'S DRAFT AS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE, ALL FIND SERIOUS FAULT WITH BOTH THE POLITICAL AND PROGRAM ASPECTS. THE PCI AND PSDI DIRECTORATES AND THE PSI, PRI AND PLI SECRETARIATS ALL MET IMMEDIATELY AFTER RECEIVING ANDREOTTI'S 49-PAGE DOCUMENT. IN ADDITION, THE DISSIDENT CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (THE "GROUP OF 100") MET AGAIN FOR THE SECOND TIME IN THE WEEK TO EXPRESS THEIR STRONG RESERVATIONS ON ANDREOTTI'S PLAN AND TO REITERATE THEIR DEMAND TO OPEN UP THE ISSUE AT A MEETING OF THE ENTIRE DC PARLIAMENTARY GROUP. ANDREOTTI WENT INTO A COLLEGIAL MEETING FEBRUARY 17 WITH THE SECRETARIES OF THE SIX PARTIES OF THE JULY ACCORD IN AN EXCEPTIONALLY TENSE ATMOSPHERE THAT ONE DC PARLIAMENTARY LEADER DESCRIBED TO US AS "VIRTUALLY A PRE-RUPTURE CLIMATE."

2. IN BRIEF, HERE ARE THE ATTITUDES EXPRESSED BY THE PARTIES ON THE EVE OF THEIR FIRST MEETING WITH ANDREOTTI:
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-- THE COMMUNISTS: IN A STATEMENT ISSUED BY CHIAROMONTE FOLLOWING THE PCI DIRECTORATE, THE PCI DESCRIBED THEIR JUDGMENT AS "CLEARLY CRITICAL" FOR ANDREOTTI'S FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE POLITICAL AND EMERGENCY NEEDS OF THE COUNTRY. POLITICALLY, THE DRAFT IS AMBIGUOUS IN NOT CLEARLY RESPONDING TO THE NEED FOR "AN EMERGENCY PACT BETWEEN DEMOCRATIC FORCES" EXPRESSED IN "A CLEAR PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY," (WHICH THE PCI NEEDS AS VISIBLE EVIDENCE TO THE PARTY BASE OF A "STEP FORWARD."). THE PROGRAM WAS ALSO JUDGED SERIOUSLY LACKING FOR FAILING TO TAKE SUFFICIENTLY INTO ACCOUNT THE POSITIONS RECENTLY APPROVED BY THE TRADE UNIONS AND THE NEED TO "SAVE ITALY" (DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH, UNEMPLOYMENT, YOUTH) THROUGH A "MORE EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF INCOMES." THE PCI ALSO LABELED THE DRAFT'S POSITION ON REFORM OF THE SECURITY SERVICES (AND THE ISSUE OF THE POLICE UNION) AS "PARTIALLY UNACCEPTABLE."

-- THE SOCIALISTS: THE PSI SECRETARIAT CALLED THE DRAFT "INADEQUATE IN ITS DEFINITION OF THE POLITICAL

FRAMEWORK." A CLEAR PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY IS
REQUIRED IN PLACE OF THE OLD ABSTENTION FORMULA.
THE PSI ALSO FOUND ANDREOTTI'S PROGRAM INSUFFICIENT
BUT FAILED TO IDENTIFY SPECIFIC COMPLAINTS. THE
DOCUMENT UNDERLINED, HOWEVER, THE PSI'S BELIEF THAT
A SOLUTION COULD BE WORKED OUT IN A "COLLEGIAL"
APPROACH.

-- THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS: THE DIRECTORATE
CONSIDERED THE OVERALL DRAFT AS "A SATISFACTORY
BASIS FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS." IT EXPRESSED
CONCERN THAT THE POLITICAL FORMULA FOR "COLLEGIAL
CONTROL" OF AN AGREED UPON PROGRAM NEEDED TO BE
SPELLED OUT MORE CLEARLY TO PREVENT IMPLEMENTATION
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"EXCLUSIVELY BY THE TWO LARGEST PARTIES." (THREE
PSDI DIRECTORATE MEMBERS VOTED AGAINST, STATING THAT
THE PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY REQUESTED BY THE PCI
"CONSTITUTED THE BEGINNING OF A POLITICAL PROCESS
DESTINED TO END IN THE COMPROMISE").

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ROME 3153

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-- THE REPUBLICANS: THE SECRETARIAT DECLARED UNACCEPTABLE ANY INTERPRETATION OF THE POLITICAL FORMULA THAT DOES NOT PERMIT "THE JOINT SIGNING OF A CONFIDENCE MOTION IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS. THE PRI WAS ALSO SHARPLY CRITICAL OF THE DRAFT PROGRAM FOR ITS "SUBSTANTIAL UNDERESTIMATING OF THE EVER MORE SERIOUS ECONOMIC, FINANCIAL, AND PUBLIC ORDER CONDITIONS WHICH ARE ROCKING THE COUNTRY."

-- THE LIBERALS: THE SECRETARIAT DESCRIBED THE PROGRAM AS BEING INSUFFICIENTLY SPECIFIC AND DETAILED
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AND REAFFIRMED THE PLI'S UNWILLINGNESS TO "PARTICIPATE IN A MAJORITY WITH THE PCI." ACCORDINGLY, "THE PLI RETAINS THAT THE CONFIDENCE MOTION MUST BE SIGNED ONLY BY THE DC."

-- THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS: WITHIN THE DC, THE REACTION OF A SIZEABLE GROUP OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS (THE GROUP OF 100) AND THE PARTY'S CENTER-RIGHT WING (DOROTEI AND FORZE NUOVE FACTIONS) WAS EQUALLY CRITICAL. ON FEB. 16, THE GROUP OF 100 STEERING COMMITTEE ISSUED A DOCUMENT WHICH CALLED ANDREOTTI'S OFFER TO "REQUEST A FAVORABLE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE" FROM THE PCI AS UNACCEPTABLE. WHILE THE UNITY OF THE GROUP HAS NOT YET BEEN SERIOUSLY BREACHED, THE POSSIBILITY THAT EVEN 20 TO 30 DC DEPUTIES MIGHT VOTE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IS UNDOUBTEDLY SERIOUSLY WORRISOME TO DC LEADERS WHO HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED THAT THEY WILL NOT ALLOW A DAMAGING SPLIT TO DEVELOP IN THE PARTY. WE ARE TOLD BY BOTH GROUP OF 100 LEADERS AND SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS THAT ONE OF THE REASONS THE PCI IS DEMANDING QUICK RESOLUTION OF THE CRISIS IS THAT IT FEARS GREATER RIGIDITY MIGHT DEVELOP IN THE DC OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS IS DRAWN OUT.

3. COMMENT. WHILE ALL THE PARTIES STILL APPEAR STRONGLY COMMITTED TO REACH A SOLUTION, THE POSITIONS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY RIGID, MAKING COMPROMISE

EVER MORE DEFFICULT. THE POLITICAL HURDLE APPEARS BOTH THE MOST SERIOUS AND THE MOST IMMEDIATE AT THE MOMENT. THE LEFT PARTIES APPEAR UNWILLING TO NEGOTIATE A PROGRAM UNTIL THEY HAVE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED THE POLITICAL FORMULA.

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4. WHAT IS ALL THE FUSS ABOUT? TO A NON-ITALIAN EYE, ANDREOTTI HAS INVITED THE PCI TO PARTICIPATE IN A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. THE POLITICAL PREAMBLE CLEARLY STATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL REQUEST A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM THE PARTIES THAT SUBSCRIBE TO THE PROGRAM ACCORD. THE LIBERALS AND MANY CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS REGARD ANDREOTTI'S OFFER AS JUST THAT, THE FORMATION OF A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY WITH THE PCI. SHOULDN'T THE PCI BE JUBILANT? THE COMMUNISTS AND THE LEFT PARTIES, HOWEVER, HAVE REJECTED ANDREOTTI'S OFFER AS TOTALLY INADEQUATE. THEY DO NOT REGARD IT AS SUFFICIENTLY "CONTRACTUAL" AND "EXPLICIT." WHILE OUTSIDE OBSERVERS WILL HAVE DIFFICULTY IN PERCEIVING THE DISTINCTION, THE PROBLEM IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO THE PARTIES HERE. THE ISSUE SEEMS TO BE THIS: WILL THE PARTIES DEMONSTRATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT AS EQUAL PARTNERS BY JOINTLY SPONSORING AND SIGNING A DOCUMENT AT THE MOMENT OF THE CONFIDENCE VOTE (AS THE PCI DEMANDS)? OR, WILL THE GOVERNMENT ONLY INVITE THE PARTIES TO VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE GOVERNMENT, THEREBY AVOIDING AN INTER-PARTY PACT OR DOCUMENT AND RESTRICTING THE RELATIONSHIP TO A BILATERAL ONE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INDIVIDUAL PARTIES. STRANGE AS IT MIGHT SEEM, FAILURE TO BREAK THE IMPASSE ON THIS ISSUE COULD WELL DOOM ANDREOTTI'S ATTEMPT TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. GARDNER

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